



ARTS AND CULTURE

The City Arts and Culture Department (ACD) is dedicated to showcasing El Paso as an international, cultural destination by presenting high quality arts and cultural experiences. The wonders of visual arts, dance, music, the theatre and literary arts enrich the minds of children and adults alike, engaging them in a world of creative and innovative opportunities. Programs offered through the ACD are diverse and exciting:

- **Arts in Education** provides opportunities for students in grades K-12 to experience artistic expression in the classroom. Annually more than 50 artists visit classrooms in Ysleta ISD and EPISD to bring the arts to nearly 2,000 children, mostly in the elementary schools.
- **Young at Arts** is a theater series where children ages 5-18 can audition and perform on stage at the Chamizal National Memorial. This year, over 1,770 children participated in the series.
- **Music Under the Stars** hosts internationally acclaimed musicians and local artists. This summer's performances at the Chamizal Memorial Theatre saw a collective audience of almost 83,000 attendees.
- **World on a String Guitar Festival** has played host to the best guitarists in the world giving the community the opportunity to develop a taste for first rate musicianship, i.e. Los Romeros, The Festival of Four, Elliot Fisk, Kronos Quartet and many others.
- **Alfresco! Fridays** is the tableau for the talented local artist to perform to a host of people from all areas of the city that congregate in the Downtown district. In 2004, over 12,300 people enjoyed performances.

COMMUNITY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Community and Human Development provides valuable funding that enables the City to revitalize low-income neighborhoods, strengthen the social services delivery system, increase affordable housing opportunities, address the problems of homelessness, and generally enhance the quality of life for low-income El Pasoans. Funded by a Community Development Block Grant since 1975, approximately \$295 million have changed the face of low-and moderate-income neighborhoods.

- The Community and Human Development Department includes 46 social service programs, 2 housing counseling services projects and 27 public facility projects.
- The Social Services Division served 23,000 low and moderate income residents; 2,500 seniors and adults with disabilities; 4,500 children and youth; 7,900 individuals who accessed specialized medical care; 7,500 homeless people; and 7,044 additional homeless who were assisted through a HUD grant.
- Over 2,200 seniors volunteered in 138 different sites through the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. Since January 2003, they have volunteered over 457,000 hours. Additionally, the 160 El Paso Foster Grandparents provided over 126,000 hours of service to over 425 special needs children throughout the community.
- Over 133 families were assisted through the First Time Buyer Assistance program.
- The Housing Division has assisted in the construction of 75 new homes for low-income homebuyers and single women.



NEIGHBORHOODS FIRST

Since December 2003, the City of El Paso has been recognizing neighborhoods through the Neighborhoods First Initiative. The purpose of this program is to assist residents in forming neighborhood associations and to identify potential needs related to neighborhood services. The program is operated by a Neighborhoods Liaison who facilitates the recognition process. The Neighborhoods Liaison also builds partnerships with community stakeholders for other services related to neighborhoods. Since the program's inception, 42 new neighborhood associations have been formed and recognized.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Two categories of recreational facilities are the basis for a comprehensive parks and recreation program of El Paso –active play areas, which accommodate games of all types for all ages and passive play areas that provide facilities for picnics, kite flying or simply the enjoyment of the surrounding aesthetics.

- The City of El Paso actively manages 175 parks, 19 recreation centers, 9 senior centers, 7 shelters, 9 indoor swimming pools and 5 outdoor pools.
- The City also owns two golf courses, Lone Star Golf Club and Painted Dunes Golf Course, that are operated by a private contractor.
- The Parks and Rec Department is responsible for the annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony, a 68-year-old project that decorates the downtown area and attracts local and out of town visitors each year. For the past seven years, it has also included a parade of lights that



winds through the streets of Downtown El Paso, attracting over 50,000 people annually.

- The City of El Paso has over 500 different sporting leagues and programs for youth, teens, adults and seniors. Together the programs have about 80,000 participants per year and train over 30,000 parents, 2,000 coaches and 500 officials.
- The Department has a nationally recognized Learn-to-Swim program that utilizes Gus and Goldie walk-arounds to market the program. Over 2,225 children participated in swimming lessons this past Summer.
- The City of El Paso offers opportunities for any citizen to enjoy sports at over 60 outdoor basketball courts, 40 outdoor tennis courts, 13 handball courts, 11 outdoor volleyball courts, 2 horseshoes sites, 20 jogging trails, 17 gyms and three open boxing rings.
- Recreation Centers offer a variety of activities for

seniors and children. Approximately 4,000 children and 1,000 seniors utilize the Centers.

- The City also offers special programs in cooperation with other organizations to include Senior Games, Sun Country Club Rec, Día de los Niños / Día de los Libros and Neighborhood Youth Outreach.
- The City maintains a State-of-the-art in-line hockey arena at Nations Tobin Park and a 24,000 square foot state-of-the-art skate park at Carolina Center.



TOURISM

El Paso has retained its unique history, celebrates its present prosperity, and looks eagerly toward its promising future. El Paso promotes itself as a way for visitors to "Do Texas Different." The El Paso Convention and Visitors Bureau and the El Paso Convention and Performing Arts Center strive to strengthen the economy of greater El Paso by attracting visitors to the Southwest.

- The Spirit of Amigo program, an ambassador program, showcases the City to key leaders in the community who can assist the Convention and Visitors Bureau staff in recruiting larger conventions to El Paso.
- An increase in the hotel occupancy, average daily rate and total revenue has helped to maintain a healthy lodging industry in El Paso. During the First, Second and Third Quarters of 2004, the State Comptroller's Office ranked El Paso first among Texas' 10 most populated cities in hotel occupancy.
- Over 109,000 individuals enjoyed Theatre Events at the Abraham Chavez Theatre this year.
- El Paso has built an exciting partnership with Jam Theatricals out of Chicago, Illinois, to offer theatre patrons the "Broadway in El Paso" theater series. The 2003-2004 series included: Fosse, Lord of the Dance, Seussical the Musical, Grease, Kiss Me Kate, and Fame.
- The message "Do Texas Different" is seen across the country and deep into Mexico through an aggressive advertising campaign in such publications as Southwest Airlines Meeting Update, Texas & New Mexico Journey and USA Weekend. The total number of positive impressions of El Paso seen in these magazines last year was 15,150,766 readers. The Texas Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus and the Texas Society of Association Executives have recognized these efforts and specialized programs as tops in the State.
- The Bureau operates four Visitor Information Centers. Over 44,000 visitors and tourists were assisted at the various Visitor Information Centers this year.
- The Bureau was awarded the honor of managing the operation of the historic Plaza Theatre. The theatre is currently undergoing a \$38 million renovation.

HARVEST MARKET

In 2004, the El Paso community saw the development and operation of the City of El Paso's first farmer's market, the Mission Trail Harvest Market. The Market operated every Saturday from June 12th to October 30th, 2004, on the Tigua Indian Reservation. The Mission Trail Harvest Market did more than benefit area producers; it also acted as a versatile and valuable tool for community and economic development.



The Mission Trail Harvest Market was financed through \$87,000 in grants, which was matched with in-kind support from City departments, the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Tiguas and the Texas Cooperative Extension. In total, 56 small businesses, involving approximately 170 entrepreneurs and 21 community partners, participated in the Market during its first season. It is estimated that the Grand Opening on June 12, 2004 attracted between 3,500 to 4,000 people and the Final day of the Market attracted over 2,700 visitors and 40 vendors.

LIBRARIES

The El Paso Public Library was established in 1894 making it the First Public Library of Texas. It currently houses one of the foremost caches of Southwestern History in the United States including one of three original copies of the Treaty of Velasco, signed by General Santa Anna and David G. Burnet, which declared Texas' independence from Mexico. It houses historic photographs and newspaper files from the area dating back to the 1800's. It also contains precious works of art by Tom Lea and Jose Cisneros, both of whose works hang in the White House.

The El Paso Public Library system currently includes 12 facilities and one bookmobile. The Main Library in downtown El Paso will soon expand into an 110,000 square foot, state of the art library.

- Over 1.7 million patrons served last year
- Over 2.5 million books and materials
- Co-sponsored the 8th Annual Día de los Niños/Día de los Libros celebration which attracted over 42,000 children and parents and distributed thirty-thousand free books



MUSEUMS

The City's Museums Department is entrusted with collecting, interpreting, preserving and exhibiting works of art and artifacts that recognize the region's multi-cultural heritage and contributions. The Department is made up of the El Paso Museum of Art, the Archaeology Museum and the El Paso Museum of History.

The **El Paso Museum of Art**, located downtown adjacent to the Arts Festival Plaza, is home of the famous Kress Collection. The museum also includes the Tom Lea Gallery, the DeWetter Gallery and the Contemporary Gallery that feature changing exhibits throughout the year. Educational facilities include a 200-seat auditorium, library and classrooms.

- Over 70,000 visitors experienced the Museum in 2004 and over 25,000 school children toured with docents.
- A \$500,000 gift was generously donated to the Museum's Foundation.
- Programming and education were taken to new levels with the implementation of the New Perspectives: Visiting Scholar Lecture Series, a program that is host to three leading masters in the museum field who give lectures related to the Museum's permanent collection.

The **El Paso Museum of Archaeology at Wilderness Park** tells the story of the American Indian inhabitants of the El Paso area, the American Southwest and Northern Mexico, from ancient times through the present. Two galleries depict American Indian life-ways, material culture and art through dioramas and exhibits. The Museum also offers over 15 acres of nature trails, outdoor exhibits and a garden where more than 200 varieties of native plants live.

- 22,800 visitors explored the museum and 8,000 students toured the grounds in 2004.
- \$10,000 in grant funds were received for the construction of cases and drawers to showcase artifacts.
- The museum works cooperatively with the University of Texas at El Paso to present new programming – in 2004, Mama's Molcajete: Mestizaje of Mexican Cuisines.

The **El Paso Museum of History** explores over four centuries of regional history including early Spanish Colonial settlement of the area, industrial and agricultural growth, famous gunfights and the Mexican Revolution. The Museum involves diverse audiences in exploring a variety of human experiences and encourages individuals to explore the past and reflect on their own place in history.

- In April 2004, the Museum of History broke ground on a new downtown facility. It is expected to be completed in the Fall of 2005.
- The museum saw 4,161 visitors in 2004.

ZOO

The El Paso Zoo brings nature's majesty and biodiversity into focus for all to enjoy through masterfully crafted natural habitat exhibits. The Zoo features over 250 species of animals from the Americas and Asia. Guided tours and sea lion programs are offered on weekends.

Volunteers and staff have been very active in promoting conservation efforts regionally and around the world including an effort to call attention to the endangered status of the Asian elephant. Volunteers gathered over 6,000 signatures on a petition urging the Republic of Indonesia to protect critical elephant habitat in Sumatra. Funds were raised to support the project through behind the scenes tours and cell phone recycling.

- A Sea Lion Exhibit, World of the California Sea Lion opened to the public in February 2004.
- Three Amur leopard cubs were born at the Zoo. The leopards are on the critically endangered species list.
- A partnership with the El Paso Water Utilities was formed to improve water quality and conservation at the Zoo. The project will also include enhancements for shade.
- Over 313,000 people visit the Zoo annually; more than 30,000 children experience the wonders of nature through the Zoo's Traveling Safari Program.
- www.elpasozoo.org won the 2004 Best Website on the Border award.

EL PASO ZOO



HEALTH

In a city with almost 700,000 residents, it is a large undertaking to ensure a healthy community. The El Paso City-County Health and Environmental District is at the forefront of this effort to promote, ensure and improve the health and wellness of the El Paso community.



In 2004, the El Paso City-County Health and Environmental District served over 326,432 clients within 20 different program areas, not including the number of client visits at Neighborhood Health Clinics. Some of the programs encompass areas such as Child Health, Immunizations and Animal Regulation and Disease Control, to name a few.

Over \$13 million in funding for existing and new grants was secured from various sources in FY04, up 10% over FY03, facilitating program operation and quality result attainment, such as:

- **Quality Assurance/Safety:** Health district identified as a top scorer by the City's Safety Consultant during the yearly safety audit.
- **Public Health and Community Services – Immunizations:** Achieved highest immunization compliance rate in Texas of 81.6%, according to the National Immunization Survey.
- **Food Inspection Program:** No laboratory confirmed food-borne illness outbreaks have been recorded in El Paso since 1994; Set record attendance for Food Handler & Food Management classes at 16,933.
- **Environmental General – Vector:** Conducted first-ever winter surveillance initiative inside storm drains to enhance mosquito control.
- **Dental Program:** Acquired a second mobile dental unit from Texas Department of State Health Services for a three-year period.
- **Community Health Preparedness:** El Paso is first in Texas to implement RODS Syndromic Surveillance System.
- **Community Assessment:** El Paso achieved the lowest rate in Texas for elevated Blood Lead Levels in children at 1%.
- **Animal Regulation and Disease Control:** Completed construction of new Animal Control Shelter in Northeast El Paso.
- **WIC: Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Pilot Project** was implemented resulting in an increased enrollment of 47,000 and a positive impact on area vendors.